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INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 8021  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1295  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 001271

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ARP (BMASILKO) AND EEB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/5/2018

TAGS: [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [ENRG](#) [PGOV](#) [UK](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: UK PM BROWN PROMOTES BUSINESS AND ENERGY TIES WITH UAE

Classified by Ambassador Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary. In an October 5 briefing for G8 and EU ambassadors, the UK ambassador denied press reports that Prime Minister Gordon Brown had pressed the UAE for a financial commitment to the international bailout during his November 3 visit to the UAE. Rather, Brown discussed the challenges facing the IMF and how the UAE could participate in the international response to the global financial crisis. Brown, who was accompanied by 35 British CEOs, also promoted UK-UAE business ties, particularly in the energy industry. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On November 5, British Ambassador Edward Oakden briefed G8 and EU ambassadors on Prime Minister Gordon Brown's November 2-3 visit to the UAE. Oakden said that, although the press had spun the visit as a cash-finding mission, the main public themes of the visit were energy, education and finance, as well as bilateral relations and regional themes. Oakden said private meetings with UAEG leaders included discussion of the international financial crisis, as well as regional challenges and bilateral issues.

¶3. (C) Oakden reported that Brown did not ask for any specific UAE contribution to the IMF, although he did discuss the financial pressure the IMF was under and noted that additional resources were needed. Oakden reported that the UAEG responded "positively; in the sense of not negatively." Brown told UAE officials that those who have a role in international financial markets need a place in the decision-making process. Oakden said there was no specific mention of UAE desire to participate in the upcoming G20 Summit. However, there was some discussion of whether Saudi Arabia could represent the views of the region and UAE officials indicated their desire to be part of any post-conference process.

¶4. (C) Brown, accompanied by State Secretary for Business Peter Mandelson and State Secretary for Energy and Climate Change Ed Miliband, led a delegation of 35 CEOs in a trip that also included stops in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. At MASDAR, Miliband signed a cooperative agreement on the development of renewable energy and clean technology solutions. Shell Executive Director Malcolm Brinded, part of Brown's delegation, also inked a MOU with ADNOC for offshore gas exploration during the visit.

¶5. (C) In Abu Dhabi, Brown's visit included the Higher College of Technology, Mubadala, and a speech at the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference. UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan hosted a reception for Brown, who also visited the UK Typhoon Squadron at the Air War Center at Al Dhafra Air Force Base. In Dubai, Brown had a 45-minute meeting and lunch with Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. He also attended a business to business forum and met with young Arab leaders, according to Oakden.

OLSON